



IPSWICH
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Customer Access Strategy
2022-25**

INTRODUCTION

Ipswich Borough Council has had an ongoing focus on making it easier for our customers to get in touch with us.

The Council's previous Customer Access Strategy 2018-21 was based around 5 key priorities:-

1. Digital by default
2. First point resolution
3. Online access to Council services 24/7
4. Maximising the use of technology
5. Measuring customer experience and acting on feedback

This previous strategy has ensured customers have been provided with a variety of access channels when contacting the Council. Customers have been encouraged to self-serve whilst also making sure that customers who can't or don't wish to self-serve can still make contact on the telephone or face to face.

The customer experience has been improved through internal service reviews using Business Process Re-engineering, providing resolution to the customer enquiry at the first point of contact and ensuring that more Council services are accessible at times that suit the customer, automating processes so that customers can self-serve.

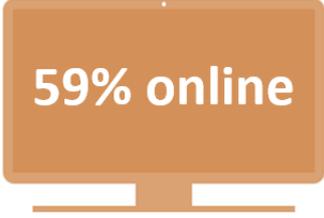
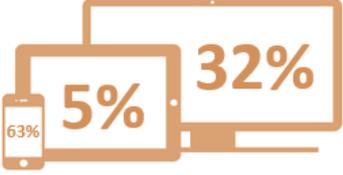
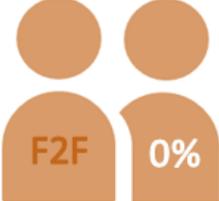
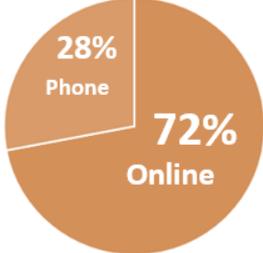
Ipswich Borough Council is committed to being a modern, efficient Council which provides value for money and has the needs of residents at the centre of our decision making. Like all local authorities across the country, we are having to deliver services against a reduced budget and an increase in demand for our services.

This new Customer Access Strategy 2022 to 2025 sets out how, while facing increasing budget pressures, in a changing environment that is recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, we will further strengthen customer relationships, improving experience and increasing satisfaction, by working closely with our customers to ensure our services are provided in the way our customers need them.



Councillor Sarah Barber
March 2022

THE CURRENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

 <p>59% online</p>	<p>59% of all contact in Customer Services is online</p>	 <p>41%</p>	<p>41% of contact in Customer Services are telephone calls</p>
 <p>630 a month 41,000+ sign ups</p>	<p>630 customers sign up to the My Ipswich portal on average per month. 41,000+ total sign ups.</p>	 <p>19,975</p>	<p>The number of calls received to the Customer Contact Centre per month</p>
 <p>5% 32% 63%</p>	<p>Devices customers are using to access the My Ipswich customer portal</p>	 <p>F2F 0%</p>	<p>0.1% of all contact is via face-to-face in Customer Services</p>
 <p>2,567</p>	<p>Online forms completed each month via the My Ipswich customer portal</p>	 <p>28% Phone 72% Online</p>	<p>72% of payment transactions are online and 28% are through automated/telephone calls</p>
 <p>93%</p>	<p>93% of online customers are satisfied with the service provided</p>	 <p>90%</p>	<p>90% of phone customers are satisfied with the service provided</p>

AIMS OF THIS STRATEGY

The 2022-25 Customer Access Strategy has a focus on the whole organisation, shaping how the Council will continue to transform service delivery; providing excellent service to customers and delivering value for money to the taxpayer.

We will ensure customers are at the centre of everything we do, their requirements will shape the design and delivery of our services

We will ensure that we have effective engagement with both internal and external customers which helps us to fully understand their needs and we will use the outcomes of that engagement to design services around our customers' needs. We will re-engineer all processes to improve the customer experience and eliminate inefficiency and reduce costs

We will ensure that our services are flexible and can adapt to the changing needs of our customers in the future

Our customers and their needs will change. The continual development of technology means that methods, reasons and content of customer interaction will change and our services will need to be able to reflect this. The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated that we need to be able to adapt to changing circumstances, with further changes yet to come which cannot be accurately predicted. Therefore, we need to ensure that all services can be flexible and will be able to adapt to ongoing change.

We will aim to provide a consistent and high quality of service wherever and however customers interact with us

Our customers need to receive a consistent high quality customer experience however they choose to make contact with us.

We will continue to adopt a digital first approach, promoting and supporting self-service wherever possible

Digital technology has changed the way customers interact with us and we need to ensure that our digital services can continue to meet this demand and that they are available at times that suit our customers. Recognising that access to our services through digital means doesn't suit everyone we will continue to provide services through other means; ensuring customers can also still contact us by phone and where necessary a face to face appointment can be arranged.

DELIVERING SERVICES BASED ON OUR CUSTOMERS' NEEDS

We will engage with customers to understand what they need, we will use what they tell us and the data we hold on their interactions with us to:-

- Define who our customers are and what they want
- Review our existing services so we fully understand the customer journey from the perspective of the customer
- Define our primary customer journeys – 80% of interactions are typically about a small number of things.
- Consider how the Council needs to be organised to optimise and streamline these journeys and processes so that they require as little effort from the customer as possible to get what they want
- Redesign services to make them simpler and easier for the customer to understand and access
- Re-engineer processes to improve the customer experience and eliminate inefficiency and reduce costs
- Provide customers with the support they need at the first point of contact

We will review our Customer Contact provision to:-

- Maintain integration with redesigned services, supporting cross-channel communications and leveraging leading-edge IT
- Ensure the provision is sector leading through being multichannel, multi-disciplined and multi-tooled, with a focus on high quality
- Operate at optimal efficiency against a backdrop of the conflicting demands of a need to reduce costs whilst delivering a superior customer service

When customers contact us we will:-

- Listen to what they are saying
- Respond quickly and accurately
- Be open and transparent about what we can deliver
- We will provide customers with reliable access to a single, centralised knowledge base through a redesigned website
- Ensure our Customer Service Agents provide a consistent high quality customer experience speeding up response times, by providing first time resolutions with confidence.

When things go wrong, we will:-

- Put things right where we can and apologise
- Learn lessons
- Make changes in order to prevent a re-occurrence
- Where necessary review our approach to the management of complaints

SUMMARY

This strategy requires resources across the whole organisation to be committed to a change in our focus from being one structured around functional services to one that is defined and shaped around what the customer wants.

In order for the strategy to be successful, organisational culture needs to embrace the pace and frequency of change that will need to be delivered. There will need to be an agile approach and a culture that accepts, embraces and thrives on change in all areas of the Council for the aims of this strategy to be delivered.